

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF

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BEFORE THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

ON THE 2006 POSTURE OF THE UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND

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HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

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UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND POSTURE FOR 2006

I. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

United States Central Command (CENTCOM) is in the middle of a fifth consecutive year of sustained warfare in its area of operations. The Command remains engaged in three principal activities: (1) defeating al Qaida and associated extremist networks throughout the region, (2) stabilizing Iraq and Afghanistan, and (3) partnering with governments and their militaries in the region to help them develop the capabilities and institutions to defeat terrorists and extremists on their own. In addition, U.S. and Coalition military forces ensure the flow of global resources and deter hostile powers throughout the region. These activities are mutually reinforcing. Progress in one spurs momentum in others. CENTCOM forces are daily engaged in the full spectrum of military operations throughout a major theater of war. Counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, training of friendly forces, civil affairs and humanitarian operations are examples of the routine joint missions performed with great distinction by our young troops.

Given the complexity of the region and the numerous operations in which we are engaged, CENTCOM is divided into three subcomponent commands. Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan (CFC-A) oversees U.S. and Coalition activities in Afghanistan, parts of Pakistan and the Central Asian states. Multi-National Force - Iraq (MNF-I) heads our operations in Iraq. Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) directs our efforts in Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Yemen, Kenya and the Seychelles. These commands employ military forces to conduct a variety of operations and are fully supported by our maritime, air, land, and special operations component commands. We continually reassess and adapt our command and control efforts in order to meet changing circumstances. We anticipate major transitions in

2006, as we shift the burden of counterinsurgency lead to Iraqi forces and as NATO assumes a more direct role in stability operations in Afghanistan.

In 2005, military forces throughout the region did their part to put pressure on extremist networks, particularly al Qaida and associated movements. Across the CENTCOM theater, regional nation counterterrorist cooperation and independent operations to kill and capture key al Qaida leaders increased. In Iraq and Afghanistan, U.S. and Coalition counterterrorist forces destroyed and disrupted al Qaida cells and worked to deny al Qaida operatives secure safe havens. In Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, local security forces experienced increasing success in combating their internal al Qaida threats. While al Qaida remains dangerous, the majority of nations in the region actively attack this terrorist group and their associated movements. These attacks, combined with al Qaida's deliberate slaughter of innocent civilians, have made their ideology less attractive in the region than it was a year ago.

In Iraq and Afghanistan, we worked closely with Iraqi and Afghan army and police forces in providing the security that enabled millions of Iraqi and Afghan citizens to take part in free elections. The elections of 2005 were watershed events. Not only was each a significant setback for the extremists and insurgents in these countries, but most of the security tasks during election periods were conducted by Iraqi and Afghan national forces, giving further confidence to their people that security and representative government are inextricably linked.

The Iraqi elections in December were particularly important. Since the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein was removed in 2003, a persistent insurgency in Sunni Arab areas has hampered progress toward civil government. In December's elections, Sunnis voted in large numbers. While too soon to gauge the impact of this participation on the broader insurgency, the new government will have four years in which to build durable government

institutions. Iraqi stability can be achieved through a combination of reliable security forces, an improving economy, and legitimate government. Legitimacy will in part be defined in terms of how Iraq's leadership manages sectarian violence. Civil unrest must ultimately be handled by Iraqis for Iraqis.

Our training of Iraqi security forces over the past year produced significant, tangible results. Many Iraqi Army units are now in the lead in the counterinsurgency fight in key areas of the country. While large numbers of units are being equipped and trained, institutional building of military academies and training centers moves forward as well. Small teams of U.S. and Coalition soldiers serve with the Iraqi military and many Iraqi police units, providing Iraqi forces with access to U.S. and Coalition combat support and logistics enablers. A similar model exists with Afghan National Army units.

During 2005, U.S. forces patrolled vital seaways and air space to ensure the continued flow of commerce in this energy-rich region of the world. American military presence coupled with robust military exercise programs, which enhance cooperation and coordination with our friends in the region, sent important signals to unfriendly states in the region such as Iran and Syria. Simultaneously, we continued to work with governments in the region to help them build force capabilities to deny our extremist enemies access to ungoverned spaces and safe havens from which to plan and execute terrorist strikes.

U.S. and Coalition forces also engaged in numerous humanitarian missions throughout the CENTCOM area of responsibility (AOR). We worked closely with the Pakistani military in reacting to the devastating earthquake there, deploying over 1,200 American military personnel who brought logistical and medical capabilities that saved thousands of lives. Throughout the Horn of Africa, we performed low cost, but much appreciated

civil action projects, such as digging wells, building schools, and providing small medical and veterinary team visits to remote villages. Such operations deepen trust and cooperation between U.S. forces and the citizens of the region. When coupled with counterterrorist and border control training, our Joint Task Force in the Horn of Africa provides a stabilizing influence in a difficult, under-resourced region. CJTF-HOA's work there makes extremist activity in the region more difficult.

In 2006, we must capitalize on these successes. We will work closely with our partners throughout the region to continue to pressure the al Qaida network, take down its operating cells, expose its dangerous designs and goals, and kill and capture its leaders, while preventing these extremists from obtaining weapons of mass destruction. We will accelerate moving competent Iraqi forces, both military and police, to take the lead in the counterinsurgency fight, while continuing our efforts to train these forces to perform the full range of military tasks required of a sovereign state. In Afghanistan, training of Afghan security forces will also take on added importance. CENTCOM will continue to transition conventional stability operations in Afghanistan to NATO. However, with a significant U.S. conventional presence in the eastern part of the country, a robust American counterterrorism capability throughout the entire country, and continued development of Provincial Reconstruction Teams, U.S. efforts in Afghanistan will remain vital to achieving stability there. In the Horn of Africa, we will continue to work to enable regional nations to strengthen their ability to resist extremist activity.

U.S. forces will also continue to maintain an unmatched naval and air presence in the region that deters destabilizing activities by Iran, while safeguarding the region's vital links to the global economy. As always, we must guard against and be ready to respond to the potential for strategic surprise and unwelcome developments, such as a major terrorist strike against

oil infrastructure, a closure of one of the region's strategic sea lanes, escalating political strife, or nation state expansion or support of terrorist activity. Given the ongoing volatility in the Middle East, the Horn of Africa, and Central Asia, these areas will continue to require considerable regional and international political, diplomatic, and military effort and focus in the years ahead.

As this statement is written, there are slightly over 200,000 American Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Coast Guardsmen, and Marines serving in the CENTCOM region. Coalition countries contribute an additional 28,000 troops under Central Command throughout the theater - their contributions remain indispensable. Other international efforts, such as NATO's International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) in Afghanistan, provide additional international military capability. Taking into account Afghan and Iraqi forces, which operate alongside U.S. and Coalition forces, and Pakistani, Saudi, and other regional forces, there are over 600,000 troops under arms engaged in combat operations in the CENTCOM region.

American forces in the CENTCOM AOR operate at an exceptional standard of tactical and operational excellence. Their fusion of operations and intelligence, ability to strike with precision, global logistics capabilities, outstanding small unit leadership, and integrity and professionalism make them a formidable force without equal. In nearly five years of continuous combat, they have achieved a remarkable record of tactical victory in nearly every engagement.

Our troops and their families have endured significant sacrifice over years of dangerous yet essential duty in the Central Command area. Our nation has lost many of its brave citizens in these dangerous combat zones. Others have been grievously wounded. We honor their courage and determination. We are also mindful of the losses of Iraqi, Afghans, and the troops of our many Coalition partners who fight alongside us.

As Iraq and Afghanistan move toward stability and as we and our partners continue to fight against al Qaida and its allies in the region, we should not underestimate the challenges ahead. We operate in a volatile and dangerous part of the world where extremists battle moderates in an ideological struggle of influence and ideas. This is not a clash between civilizations, but within one - the Muslim world. We must help the moderates succeed, while recognizing that our enemies are as patient as they are ruthless. The continuing support of the Congress and the American people is essential to achieving success in the long war ahead.

II. MISSION

U.S. Central Command conducts operations to attack, disrupt and defeat terrorism, deter and defeat adversaries, deny access to WMD, assure regional access, strengthen regional stability, build the self-reliance of partner nations' security forces, and protect the vital interests of the United States within the area of responsibility.

III. NATURE OF THE REGION

The CENTCOM region spans 6.5 million square miles and 27 countries including Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, Egypt, the countries of the Horn of Africa, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, the countries of the Arabian Peninsula, Pakistan, and the Central Asian states as far north as Kazakhstan. It incorporates a nexus of vital transportation and trade routes, including the Red Sea, the Northern Indian Ocean, and the Arabian Gulf. It is home to the strategic maritime choke points of the Suez Canal, the Bab el Mandeb, and the Strait of Hormuz. It encompasses the world's most energy-rich region - the Arabian Gulf alone accounts for 57% of the world's crude oil reserves, 28% of the world's oil production, and 41% of the world's natural gas reserves.

The more than 650 million people who live in the region make up at least 18 major ethnic groups of many nationalities and cultures. While predominantly Muslim, the region is home to adherents of all of the world's major religions. Human civilization had its birth in this region, with many cities dating back thousands of years. The diverse peoples of the region take understandable pride in their rich culture and history.

Economic, social, and political conditions vary greatly from one nation to another, with per capita incomes ranging from \$200 to nearly \$40,000. Many countries in the region suffer from pervasive corruption, low economic growth, and high unemployment that is likely to persist given the high proportions of young men and women relative to overall populations. Some governments remain hard pressed to meet popular demands for economic opportunity, more social services, and increased political participation. But in the past year, the region has also witnessed dramatic, if incremental, progress in some of these areas.

Revolutions in global communications technologies and mass media outlets have offered many in the region hopes for greater prosperity and political opportunity. At the same time, the many complex insurgencies and extremist and terrorist groups in the region feed on the fear of rapid change in a dynamic world that is increasingly interconnected. The challenge for the people in the region is to manage change without resorting to organized violence and at a pace that promotes rather than erodes stability. The challenge for the United States is to help people manage change without turning to the dark ideologies of extremists.

IV. GLOBAL COUNTERTERRORISM AND THE LONG WAR

Defeating al Qaida and associated ideological movements will require significant counterterrorism cooperation among our allies and partners not only within the CENTCOM AOR, but throughout the globe. It will also require

the dedication of military, intelligence, and many other components of national power. Our network of allies and agencies will eventually defeat the al Qaida network, but we have yet to master the integration of national and international power to achieve success against this ruthless, borderless enemy. We have long experience with nation state warfare. We must, in the years ahead, learn to organize ourselves to defeat a stateless enemy capable of delivering state-like destruction without having state-like vulnerabilities. Defeating such an enemy requires a careful study of its clearly articulated strategy and vision.

A. THE NATURE OF THE ENEMY

Al Qaida and ideologically-linked groups such as Ansar al Islam, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, al Ittihad al Islami, Jemaah Islamiyah, and Ansar al Sunna represent the main enemy to long-term peace and stability in the CENTCOM AOR, promoting and thriving on instability and violence. They challenge our partners in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia. They attack our friends in Jordan, Egypt, Turkey, Morocco, Madrid, and London. Although we have not experienced another attack on our homeland, the enemy that brought us 9/11 continues to represent a clear and unambiguous threat to our country.

This enemy seeks to topple local governments, establish a repressive and intolerant regional theocracy, and then extend its violence to the rest of the world. To effect such change, this enemy believes it must evict the United States and our Coalition allies from the region. Masking their true intentions with propaganda, rhetoric, and a sophisticated use of the mass media and the internet, this enemy exploits regional tensions and popular grievances. Al Qaida and its associated movements exhibit strategic patience and are willing to wait decades to achieve their goals.

These extremists defame the religion of Islam by glorifying suicide bombing, by taking and beheading hostages, and by the wanton use of explosive devices that kill innocent people by the score. Their false jihad kills indiscriminately and runs contrary to any standard of moral conduct and behavior. The enemy's vision of the future would create a region-wide zone that would look like Afghanistan under the Taliban. Music would be banned, women ostracized, basic liberties banished, and soccer stadiums used for public executions. The people of the region do not want the future these extremists desire. The more we talk about this enemy, the more its bankrupt ideology will become known. But more important, the more that regional leaders talk about and act against this enemy, the less attractive it will be. Osama bin Laden and Musab al Zarqawi cannot represent the future of Islam.

Al Qaida and their allies are ruthless, giving them power beyond their relatively small numbers. They are masters of intimidation. Their depraved attacks menace entire communities and can influence the policies of national governments. They embrace asymmetric warfare, focusing their means on the innocent and defenseless. In Jordan, they target wedding parties. In Iraq, they murder children playing in the streets, doctors working in hospitals, and UN employees supporting Iraqi efforts to build their country. They respect no neutral ground.

This enemy is linked by modern communications, expertly using the virtual world for recruiting, fundraising, planning, training, indoctrination, and proselytizing. The internet empowers these extremists in a way that would have been impossible a decade ago. It enables them to have global reach and to plan and coordinate terrorist operations throughout the world.

Finally, and most important, this enemy seeks to develop or acquire weapons of mass destruction. If they could develop or acquire a chemical,

biological, or nuclear device, they would use it. This is not a guess. This is what they say. Their willingness to use suicide means to deliver such a weapon heightens this threat. There should be no mistake about the stakes in this broader war against al Qaida. The enemy must be deprived of time, safe haven and resources to prevent development and use of mass-casualty producing devices.

Today, we have a much fuller understanding of the al Qaida network than we did on September 11, 2001. It exists in the geographic realm, but also thrives in virtual space, constituting a global threat. Geographically, it seeks ungoverned spaces inside weak and failing states where it can establish safe havens and training sites. In these areas, military forces - ours or others - can have good effects. But this is a thinking enemy, adapting against our strengths. They have developed virtual safe havens. They have front companies. They employ facilitators and sympathetic charities that move their finances and enable their ideology to spread around the region. It is a secretive, complex network that often hides in plain sight.

Fortunately, the vast majority of the people in the region want nothing to do with the perverted vision of Islam preached by al Qaida. But the power and grip of the al Qaida movement and ideology should not be underestimated. Communism and fascism started with relatively few, but deeply committed adherents, and the hate preached by al Qaida resonates with young men and women of little hope. Its global reach is already disturbingly apparent. In 2005, they enlisted suicide bombers from all over the Middle East and deployed over 500 of them world-wide, killing thousands of innocent civilians, most of whom were Muslims.

B. PRINCIPLES OF GLOBAL COUNTERTERRORISM AND THE LONG WAR

For the first time in our history, the principal enemy facing the United States is not another nation state - it is an ideologically-driven,

borderless network. Such an enemy requires new thinking on how we organize and fight. Militarily, we will continue to kill and capture al Qaida leaders, shut down training camps, destroy operational cells, and prevent al Qaida and associated movements from exploiting ungoverned spaces. Certainly, such action requires precision targeting and highly sophisticated intelligence networks of our own. Nonmilitary measures to defeat al Qaida will be increasingly decisive in ultimately bringing about the network's defeat. In order to counter its fanatical ideology and diminish its sources of strength, all elements of international and national power - diplomatic, political, economic, financial, the private sector - must be used to pressure the entire al Qaida and associated movement network over time.

We know the enemy's strategy and have a clearer understanding of how it operates. We and our friends in the region therefore have an opportunity to confront this enemy, adapt our tactics, techniques and procedures, and defeat these extremists before al Qaida and its underlying ideology become mainstream. To do so, we must:

- Partner with our allies in the region to help them develop their own capabilities to defeat terrorists and extremists
- Make clear to the people of the region that we have no designs on their territory or resources; that we fight together out of respect and mutual self-benefit
- Expose the enemy's fanatical ideology and dangerous designs
- Provide in coordination with regional security forces the protective shield which enables continued political and economic reform and progress
- Prevent al Qaida and associated movements from obtaining weapons of mass destruction
- Target, shut down, and hold liable those who finance extremist organizations and operations
- Evolve and broaden our Coalition to more readily share intelligence and conduct military operations
- Develop responsive wartime authorities to invest in regional security forces, border security and counterterrorist units

- Improve our networks among our agencies, allies, and partner governments to coordinate and integrate all instruments of national power
- Invest in human capital to increase our intelligence capabilities, focusing on linguists, regional specialists, and HUMINT resources
- Understand that the enemy targets our political will with asymmetric means and that achieving victory will be more about perception, will and intelligence-driven counterterrorism actions, than firepower, mass, maneuver, and territory conquered

C. STRATEGIC PRESENCE

As we implement these principles, forces should be deployed in the region to focus on building partner military capacity, protecting the flow of strategic resources, deterring hostile states, and maintaining regional U.S. counterterrorist capacity. It is important to understand that the current large conventional force posture is largely a function of counterinsurgency work in both Iraq and Afghanistan. As the lead for counterinsurgency operations shifts to Iraqis and Afghans, it is reasonable to assume that our conventional force levels will drop. As both countries stabilize and as new longer term security arrangements emerge, proper force levels can be determined. Regardless of the timing of stabilization, regional security needs will still require flexible, agile, and strategically located forward operating sites and security cooperation locations. Such locations will provide regional deterrence, adequate expandable infrastructure for contingency operations, and power projection capability for all types of forces. The Arabian Gulf, Central Asia, and Horn of Africa will require the reassurance that the strategic presence of U.S. forces brings to a volatile, vital region of the world.

V. IRAQ

A. SITUATION OVERVIEW

1. Coalition Forces. Multi-National Force - Iraq (MNF-I), headquartered in Baghdad, commands the Multi-National Corps - Iraq (MNC-I). MNC-I oversees two U.S. Army divisions and one U.S. Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) - employing altogether 15 U.S. brigades/regimental combat teams - and three multinational Coalition divisions. Coalition divisions control zones in southern and northern Iraq. Poland and the UK lead an eleven-nation and ten-nation effort, respectively, in the south, while the Republic of Korea's 'Zaytun Division' conducts operations from Irbil, in northeast Iraq. Additionally, Multi-National Security Training Command - Iraq (MNSTC-I) leads Coalition efforts to train and equip Iraqi security forces. The MNSTC-I commander also serves as the commander of the NATO effort to train these forces and build supporting institutions.

At the height of the December 2005 elections, there were approximately 154,000 U.S. forces and 21,000 Coalition forces in Iraq. Significant air, naval and special operations forces supported these troops from within Iraq and across the region. These numbers have decreased in recent months to approximately 130,000 U.S. and 19,000 Coalition troops. The most significant change in terms of troop levels in 2005 was the number of trained and equipped Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). In January 2005, there were 127,000 total Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior security forces, or 78 battalions. About a year later, there were approximately 231,000 combined security forces constituting more than 160 battalions. More important, these increasingly capable Iraqi forces are assuming greater responsibility for combating the insurgency.

2. The Enemy. Iraqi insurgents are predominantly Sunni Arab and consist of three major elements: Iraqi rejectionists, Saddamists, and terrorists and foreign fighters. These groups operate primarily in four of Iraq's eighteen provinces, where they receive varying levels of support from the Sunni population but are certainly not supported by all Sunni Arabs. Indeed, Sunni Arabs participate in all governmental activities and constitute a large number of Iraq's security forces. These different insurgent groups have varying motivations but are unified in their opposition to U.S. and Coalition presence and their refusal to accept the authority of the legitimate, democratically-elected government of Iraq. While deadly and disruptive, the insurgency is also attractive to numbers of unemployed Iraqi young men and criminals.

The Iraqi rejectionists, mostly Sunni Arabs who want a return to their privileged status under Saddam, form the largest insurgent group. Their leadership is fragmented. They view themselves as an "honorable resistance" seeking to oust foreign occupation forces and unwilling to recognize the new-found power of groups previously excluded from political and economic life.

The Saddamists are mostly former senior officials from Saddam Hussein's dictatorship. Their numbers are smaller than the Iraqi rejectionists. They seek a return to power by trying to de-legitimize and undermine the new Iraqi government through a campaign of mass intimidation against the Sunni population. They also conduct stand-off attacks with improvised explosive devices (IEDs), rockets, and mortars against U.S. and Coalition forces, Iraqi security forces, and government officials in an attempt to demoralize these groups. They exploit criminal elements to assist them with these attacks. The Saddamists lack broad popular support, but they harbor long-term designs to try to infiltrate and subvert the newly-elected government from within.

The terrorists and foreign fighters are the smallest but most lethal group. The al Qaida in Iraq (AQI) network, led by the terrorist Zarqawi, is

the dominant threat within this group. AQI's objective is to create chaos in Iraq by inciting civil war between Sunni and Shia through terrorist acts such as the recent bombing of the Golden Mosque in Samarra. Such mayhem, they believe, will topple the elected government of Iraq and drive Coalition forces from the country. This could enable AQI to establish safe havens for Islamic extremism within Iraq from which to launch terrorist attacks against other moderate regimes in the region. Zarqawi has pledged his allegiance to Osama bin Laden, and the goals of AQI support bin Ladin's broader objective of establishing a Caliphate throughout the Middle East. AQI's network is well-organized and funded. Its cellular structure permits recovery and retention of lethality even when key Zarqawi lieutenants have been killed and captured.

AQI has also established a robust network to bring suicide bombers into Iraq. Extremists throughout the Middle East and the suicide bombers themselves help finance these murderous operations. These suicide bombers primarily target Shia civilians. Through sophisticated information operations, the terrorists and foreign fighters in Iraq use their mass murder events, kidnappings, and beheadings to establish in the media the image of an Iraq in chaos with little hope of progress or peace. There is little popular support for these terrorists and foreign fighters, but their ability to intimidate entire communities enables them to operate from constantly shifting safe havens.

While the main enemy forces operate primarily in the Sunni triangle area, potential challenges exist in both the south and north. In the south, radical Shia splinter groups such as Muqtada Sadr's Jaysh al Mahdi (JAM) could pose an armed threat to the new Iraqi government. While Sadr's followers have begun to embrace the political process instead of violence, the JAM and other radicalized Shia elements with their own militias remain a latent threat to Iraqi stability. The Iraqi government recognizes that such

militias are long-term threats that need to be demobilized or incorporated into Iraq's legitimate security force institutions to ensure enduring national stability. In the north, while the Kurdish population continues to be a strong force for democracy and stability in Iraq, tensions over the status of Kirkuk could jeopardize internal stability. MNF-I will continue to assist efforts by the Iraqi government to address this issue in a fair and equitable manner.

B. STRATEGIC FOCUS

This past year, U.S. and Coalition forces in Iraq focused on: training, building, and conducting operations with capable Iraqi security forces; providing the shield behind which political and economic progress can continue and legitimate government institutions can form and take root; and killing and capturing terrorists and neutralizing the insurgency. In 2006, the training and transitions with Iraqi security forces will continue with a focus on the Iraqi Army assuming the lead in counterinsurgency and stability activities and an enhanced effort on the Iraqi police. Our goal, which we share with the people of Iraq, is a country at peace with its neighbors and an ally in the broader war against extremism, with a representative government and security forces sufficient to maintain domestic order and deny Iraq as a safe haven for terrorists.

Iraqis will increasingly take the lead in killing and capturing terrorists and neutralizing the insurgency in 2006. A key component of the counterinsurgency strategy in Iraq is to distinguish between those elements of the enemy who can be persuaded to join the political process and support the legitimate government of Iraq and those who are irreconcilable, determined to achieve their goals only through violence and intimidation. The difference between Sunni participation in the January and December 2005 elections was significant, indicating that many Sunnis are beginning to

identify their future with the political process instead of violence. Continued efforts at broadening Sunni reconciliation will be critical in bringing an increasing number of Iraqi rejectionists into the political fold.

Such reconciliation, however, will not extend to those who do not recognize the legitimacy of the democratically-elected government of Iraq. Terrorists, foreign fighters, and Saddamists make up the majority of this category. They offer no positive vision for the future of Iraq, only chaos, the slaughter of innocents, and the desire for power. U.S., Coalition, and Iraqi security forces will remain on the offensive, capturing and killing these enemies of the new Iraq, and will continue to clear areas of Iraq, such as those in Tal Afar, several Syrian border towns, and towns in the Euphrates River valley, from which terrorists operated. Future infiltration of such towns will be prevented by holding these areas with increasingly capable Iraqi security forces, and building local economic, political, and security forces and institutions to advance the safety and opportunities of Iraqis in such regions.

The insurgency in Iraq cannot be neutralized solely by military means. The political component is decisive. It allows a way for those willing to put down their arms to settle their differences through ballots, not bullets. Over the past year, U.S. and Coalition forces, and increasingly Iraqi Army and police units, provided the security shield behind which political progress continued. The political accomplishments of the Iraqi people during 2005 were remarkable. Iraqi citizens, by the millions, braved threats of violence to vote for an interim government in January 2005. These elected representatives formed an interim government and ministries, and crafted a constitution, which was approved by the Iraqi people in a national referendum. Then in December over 10 million Iraqis voted again to elect a permanent government. All of these political milestones were set out in the Transitional Administrative Law, demonstrating that the rule of law is

beginning to take hold in Iraq. When compared to our own political experience in forming a new republic, Iraq's political progress in 2005 is impressive.

We should not underestimate the current difficulties in forming a new government in the midst of a disruptive insurgency, terrorist activity, and increased sectarian tensions. The frustrating, slow, yet necessary process of forming a parliamentary government must be guided by responsible Iraqi leaders. Reaching political compromise between ethnic and religious groups that have for centuries settled their differences through bloodshed will be difficult. Enemies of the new Iraq will try to derail efforts to form a government through violence and attempts to increase sectarian tensions as was done in the bombing of the Golden Mosque in Samarra. Patience will be required both in Iraq and the United States as attempts at political compromise take time and seem inconclusive. The role of U.S. and Coalition troops, and more prominently, Iraq's security forces, will be to continue to provide the security that is essential for the political process to unfold and be successful. A successful political process is primarily in the hands of Iraq's newly-elected leaders who must work hard to forge a national unity government based on fair compromises that include all major ethnic and religious groups.

Increased security will also set the conditions for continued reconstruction in Iraq. The infrastructure supporting the basic needs of Iraqis requires complete overhaul and will take years to reach the level of neighboring states. Nevertheless, progress has been made due to American, Coalition, and Iraqi efforts and resources. Over 3,600 schools have been rehabilitated, and over 47,000 school teachers and administrators have been trained. Approximately 240 hospitals and more than 1,200 clinics have reopened. Baghdad's three sewage plants, which serve 80% of the city's population, have been rehabilitated. Thirteen power plants have also been

rehabilitated, providing approximately 60% of power generation in Iraq. And Umm Qasar's status as an international port has been restored with up to 80 ship offloads of a wide range of commodities occurring each month.

More work needs to be done. For decades, Saddam Hussein neglected Iraq's infrastructure and the basic needs of the Iraqi people, while building lavish palaces for himself. Sabotage continues to negatively impact Iraq's oil industry and electricity supply. An inefficient economic structure, insurgents, criminals, and corruption all hamper progress in these areas. Enhanced Iraqi security and economic reform of these key infrastructure systems are absolutely necessary for reconstruction and economic progress in 2006.

MNF-I's main military effort in Iraq centers around training and building increasingly capable and loyal Iraqi security forces. MNSTC-I leads this effort and over the past year, steady progress has been made, especially in terms of Iraqi forces' willingness and ability to engage in combat. A year ago there were not significant numbers of Iraqi battalions ready for combat. Now there are over 160 Iraqi Army and police battalions engaged in combat operations against the terrorists and insurgents. Over 70 of these are taking the lead in this fight, while approximately 90 are fighting alongside U.S. and Coalition forces. Last year Iraqi operational headquarters at the brigade and division level did not exist, and neither did combat service support battalions. Now there are ten division and 35 brigade headquarters in the Iraqi Army as well as seven service support battalions supporting Iraqi combat forces. In all, there are approximately 109,000 trained soldiers and 124,000 police.

More important, but more difficult to quantify, the intangibles of leadership, unit cohesion, and loyalty - critical elements of an effective military force - have improved. In 2004, some Iraqi Army and police units disintegrated when confronted by insurgents. Now they are standing,

fighting, and prevailing over the enemy on the battlefield. They are also increasingly planning and conducting independent operations. Iraqi security forces are fighting and dying for their country, taking significantly higher casualties than our own. There is no shortage of Iraqis volunteering to serve their country.

It is important to remember that American and Coalition forces are fighting as a close team with Iraq's security forces. We have over 190 embedded transition teams operating as an integral part of Iraqi units. These American and Coalition forces are making essential contributions as they enable Iraqi battalions to receive logistical and combined arms support from U.S. and Coalition forces. Many American and Coalition units also have Iraqi partner units with which they conduct combined operations and training.

Throughout the country, Iraq's security forces are also taking over their own battlespace. Currently more than 40 Iraqi Army battalions have assumed primary control of their own areas of responsibility, including important areas in Baghdad. Similarly, we have transferred authority of over a dozen forward operating bases to Iraqi units. As these Iraqi forces increasingly move to assume control over more areas of the country, U.S. and Coalition forces will increase their focus on turning over more and more security responsibility at a pace appropriate to local conditions.

The international community remains involved in the training of Iraqi security forces. Coalition members representing 18 countries are part of the NATO Training Mission - Iraq (NTM-I). NTM-I focuses on developing a professional Iraqi officer corps. The assistance of Jordan, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates continues to be noteworthy.

Ensuring capable Iraqi security forces means more than training and equipping soldiers and police, it also means helping Iraqis build the institutions, particularly the Ministries of Defense and Interior, that can sustain and instill loyalty in these forces and provide the resources and

oversight necessary to prosecute a complex counterinsurgency campaign. In 2006, MNSTC-I will increasingly focus on such efforts, working with the new leaders of these ministries to encourage Iraqi participation in them that is broad-based, from all ethnic and religious groups, and to address problems, such as corruption, that have plagued these ministries in the past.

Significant progress has been made in training and building Iraq's security forces, but challenges remain. Like many institutions in Iraq, these security forces were for decades the instruments of Saddam's reign of terror. They existed to brutalize the people of Iraq. These forces are now being trained to serve the people. Such a radical change in mission and culture will not take place overnight. But if these institutions and the Iraqis who lead them are increasingly able to focus on serving the Iraqi national interest, the stability and longevity of Iraq's new democracy will be enhanced.

C. TRANSITIONS AND TIMING

The focus of U.S. and Coalition military operations in Iraq has proceeded from invasion, to liberation, to occupation with the Coalition Provisional Authority, to partnership with the interim and transitional governments. In 2006, we will emphasize building self-reliance in Iraq's security forces and newly-elected government institutions. An essential element of achieving overall success in Iraq will depend on the leadership, vision, and character of Iraq's newly-elected government officials.

2006 is likely to be a year of significant transition in Iraq. The process of moving capable Iraqi forces to the forefront of fighting the insurgency has already begun. In liberating Tal Afar from extremist control last summer, 11 Iraqi battalions and five U.S. Army battalions carried the fight. Iraqi forces also took the lead in providing security for the December 2005 elections and in dealing with the post-Samarra bombing

tensions. We will work to accelerate this transition in 2006. But shifting the balance of Iraqi forces to the forefront of the fight is not a simple task. If it is not done well, a security vacuum could develop in certain areas of the country, to be filled by terrorists and Saddamists. The timing of this transition should be dictated by sound strategy and an assessment of intangibles such as leadership, unit cohesion, and loyalty, not fixed timetables or other arbitrary deadlines.

The same holds true for CENTCOM recommendations on determining the appropriate number of U.S. troops in Iraq. Our long-term strategy in the region will not likely be furthered by the continuing presence of a large U.S. military footprint in the Middle East. But our current strategy would be undermined by a precipitous withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq. The timing of when to reduce our forces in the region, therefore, becomes the crucial issue. Unexpected tensions or widespread violence could lead to a need for more American forces in Iraq. CENTCOM recommendations on the issue of troop levels to our civilian leadership will continue to be based on conditions on the ground in Iraq, as well as an assessment of how the U.S. force posture in the region bolsters America's national interest in the broader fight against terrorism and extremism. We have recently transitioned from 17 to 15 brigades in Iraq. To the extent U.S. forces in Iraq are further reduced during 2006, it will be the result of our troops and Iraqi forces increasingly meeting their objectives.

VI. AFGHANISTAN

A. SITUATION OVERVIEW

1. Coalition Forces. There are approximately 20,000 U.S. and 4,500 Coalition forces from twenty-five nations deployed in Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). These forces are commanded by Combined

Forces Command - Afghanistan (CFC-A), headquartered in Kabul, which assures unity of effort with the U.S. Ambassador in Kabul and the NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). Combined Joint Task Force-76 (CJTF-76) is a division-level subordinate command. CJTF-76 directs major and routine combat operations throughout Afghanistan. Linked into CJTF-76 is a robust special operations capability from U.S. and Coalition nations. Additionally, NATO's ISAF contributes approximately 8,500 troops - over 150 of whom are American. These troops are primarily located in Kabul and northern and western Afghanistan.

2. The Enemy. Consistent with CENTCOM's primary goal of defeating al Qaida and its allies, CFC-A maintains an intense focus on any indications that al Qaida is attempting to reestablish a safe haven in Afghanistan. Al Qaida senior leaders operate in Pakistan's rugged and isolated Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) that borders eastern Afghanistan. In addition to al Qaida, three insurgent groups - all with al Qaida links - constitute the main enemy threat in Afghanistan: (1) the Taliban, (2) Haqqani Tribal Network, and (3) Hezb-i-Islami Gulbuddin (HIG).

The Taliban operates primarily in the southern and eastern provinces and Kabul. Its core supporters, mostly Pashtun, seek its return to power. The Taliban has demonstrated resilience after defeats. They appeared tactically stronger on the battlefield this year, and they demonstrated an increased willingness to use suicide bomber and IED tactics. While the Taliban remain very unpopular in most parts of the country, pockets of hard-core support remain. Taliban activities remain clearly linked to al Qaida funding, direction, and ideological thinking. The Taliban do not have the capability to exercise control over large areas of Afghanistan, but they are disruptive to reconstruction and reconciliation efforts. It is increasingly clear that Taliban leaders also use Pakistan's FATA to organize, plan, and

rest. Pakistani efforts to deny this safe haven, while considerable, have yet to shut down this area to Taliban and al Qaida use.

The Haqqani Tribal Network operates primarily in eastern Afghanistan and the FATA region of Pakistan. Haqqani goals are limited primarily to obtaining autonomy in eastern Afghanistan and the FATA region. Although the most tactically proficient of the enemy we face in Afghanistan, they present a limited strategic threat.

The HIG, while remaining dangerous, similarly presents only a limited strategic threat. It operates primarily in eastern Afghanistan and is heavily involved in illicit activities such as narcotics and smuggling, resembling a Mafia-like organization more than an insurgent movement with national goals. Nevertheless, given its historical links with al Qaida, it can help facilitate al Qaida operations in Kabul and eastern Afghanistan if it finds that doing so enhances its interests. Some HIG operatives may be considering political reconciliation.

B. STRATEGIC FOCUS

In 2006, CFC-A will continue to focus on: killing and capturing terrorists and neutralizing the insurgency; providing the shield behind which economic and political progress can move forward and legitimate government institutions can form and take root; and training and building capable Afghan security forces. Additionally, CFC-A will work to ensure a smooth transition with NATO as NATO troops assume additional responsibilities and territory in Afghanistan and support counter-narcotics efforts throughout the country. Our goal, which we share with the people of Afghanistan, is a country at peace with its neighbors and an ally in the broader war against terror, with a representative government and security forces sufficient to maintain domestic order and deny Afghanistan as a safe haven for terrorists.

During the past year, CFC-A continued aggressive offensive military operations to kill and capture terrorists and insurgents and shut down the sanctuaries in which they operate. Given that the terrorists and insurgents that we are pursuing often operate in both Pakistan and Afghanistan, a key element of our strategy is deepening our cooperation with the Pakistani military operating on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. The important work to de-legitimize Afghan warlords and disarm and demobilize irregular Afghan militias also continues. These efforts take time, rarely producing major breakthroughs, but incremental progress in this important area continues. U.S. and Coalition forces dominate the battlespace and are increasingly involving Afghan National Army units in military operations.

The continued insurgency in Afghanistan will not be defeated solely by military means. In fact, the center of gravity of CFC-A's campaign is decreasingly military and increasingly in the domain of governance and economic development. American, Coalition, and Afghan forces are continuing to provide the critical shield behind which progress in the political and economic realms can continue.

In 2005, there was noteworthy political progress in Afghanistan. The citizens of Afghanistan went to the polls in September to elect a Parliament, which was seated on December 19. Voter turnout was over 50%, with 6.2 million Afghans voting for over 5,800 national and provincial candidates. Extremists failed to make good on their threats of murder to disrupt the elections. Afghan security forces played their most visible and effective role to date in providing essential security to enable the election.

Reconstruction remains a critical way to isolate our enemies, depriving them of their support base and giving Afghans hope for a better future. Continuing and sustained development efforts will be critical to overall success. The United States and our allies will continue to work with the Afghan government in assisting Afghanistan in building the infrastructure

needed for a functioning economy. The London Conference in January 2006 was an important step in this regard. More generally, Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), small civil-military affairs teams with civilian and interagency expertise, remain an important tool to achieve these results. This past year, CFC-A and its NATO-ISAF partners increased the number of PRTs to 24. Of these, 15 were directed by CFC-A, and nine others operated under the authority of NATO-ISAF. Over time, Afghan PRTs will transform from military to civilian-led organizations, and ultimately become provincial development authorities of the Afghan government.

A key strategic interest of both Afghanistan and the United States is to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a terrorist safe haven again. The most effective long-term way to achieve this end is to enable the institutions of the democratically-elected Afghan government to consolidate and extend their reach and legitimacy throughout the country. Coalition PRTs help do this by enhancing local security and extending the authority and visibility of the Afghan government into the provinces.

Training, building, and mentoring the Afghan National Army (ANA) remains a central pillar of our strategy to stabilize Afghanistan. The Afghan Army has suffered through thirty years of civil war, shattering the institutional structures of this force. Given the state of the ANA, our focus has been on quality - building from the ground up - not on quantity. There has been steady progress. The Afghan Army now numbers over 26,000 trained and equipped troops.

U.S. and Coalition forces support the training of fielded ANA battalions with Embedded Training Teams (ETT). There are over 650 military personnel serving in ETTs. These ETTs provide training, combat effects, and logistics support to ANA units. Additionally, ANA forces are now conducting combined operations with American and Coalition Forces. Most important in terms of progress, the citizens of Afghanistan are beginning to view the ANA

as a truly national institution that is both trusted and respected. The ANA played a critical role in providing security for the September parliamentary elections, extending its reach to remote villages. Its performance was widely applauded by senior Afghan officials, U.S. commanders in the field, and, most importantly, the people of Afghanistan. As the ANA is fielded, CFC-A will continue initiatives to help the Afghans reform their Ministry of Defense, the Afghan General Staff, and the ANA Regional Military Commands. While the progress with the Army is remarkable, problems with recruiting, infrastructure, and organizational reach need continued attention.

Although the development of an effective Afghan National Army is proceeding on schedule, the Afghan National Police (ANP) force requires considerable work. In conjunction with Germany and other international partners, building a professional and competent ANP remains a top CFC-A priority. Over 58,000 police have been trained. However, the force is still hampered by irregular pay, corruption, and substandard leadership that is often unaccountable to a central ministry. CFC-A and the Department of State are focused on helping the leaders of Afghanistan address these problems with additional mentoring and an emphasis on building the institutional capacity and equipment of the police force. The Government of Afghanistan and the Ministry of Interior have begun reforms, including those that cover pay, rank structure, and curbing corruption. Ultimately, police provide the security backbone against any insurgency and criminal activity. Afghanistan is intensely tribal and lacks modern infrastructure. Loyal and competent police are essential to spreading the rule of law and good governance. A long, hard road is ahead to make the Afghan police what the nation needs.

2006 will be an important year in terms of transitioning additional responsibility and territory to NATO. Specifically, Stage III of the ISAF transition is scheduled for the late spring or summer of 2006 when Regional Command South (RC South) transfers to NATO command. NATO forces in this area

will be primarily British, Canadian, and Dutch. They are prepared to aggressively address the threat situation in RC South, which remains high. CENTCOM continues to work closely with NATO to enable its command and control structures and to ensure a successful NATO transition in Afghanistan.

Having NATO, an organization consisting of 26 of the world's most powerful countries, committed to Afghanistan's future is good for Afghanistan. NATO-ISAF is already a major contributor to Afghanistan's security. As NATO eventually assumes control over all conventional U.S. and Coalition forces in Afghanistan, the United States will remain the single largest contributor of forces to this NATO effort, while also retaining a very robust counterterrorism force throughout the entire country. Deepening international commitment to Afghanistan's future will do much to assist the emerging Afghan government and diminish al Qaida's attractiveness to people in Central and South Asia.

The production and trafficking of illegal narcotics remain a significant threat not only to Afghanistan's long-term stability, but to the stability of the entire region. The United Kingdom has the overall lead, and the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement leads the U.S. effort. A Counter Narcotics Branch in CENTCOM's Joint Interagency Coordination Group (JIACG) was established to better coordinate DoD's support for U.S. national efforts. During 2005, CENTCOM delivered \$242 million in FY05 DoD supplemental funding in support of INL programs for the Afghan police, border security, and Counter-Narcotics Police (CNPA) equipment and training.

The campaign to stop narco-trafficking and eliminate poppy production is complex, requiring full interagency and international participation, particularly given the regional scope of the problem. The different elements of this campaign include law enforcement, judicial reform, poppy eradication, and alternative livelihood and public information programs. CENTCOM fully

supports all of these programs. Our roles include intelligence support, helicopter transport, logistical and administrative assistance for counter-narcotics operators in country, and *in extremis* rescue, to include MEDEVAC and close air support operations. Our PRTs also play a critical role developing viable economic alternatives to poppy production.

C. MUCH ACCOMPLISHED, MUCH MORE TO DO

Since September 2001, progress in Afghanistan has been remarkable: the al Qaida safe haven in Afghanistan was eliminated and the Taliban removed from power; security was established for a political process in which the people of the country have freely elected a president and parliament; military units spearheaded an effort to bring the significant resources and expertise of the international community to help Afghanistan begin to address many of its longstanding problems; and the United States, along with our international partners and the Afghan government, has begun the difficult work of helping the Afghan people build the institutions and infrastructure that are the key to the future of their country.

Given this progress, there is still a very strong notion of "consent" in this country - the Afghan people are very appreciative of the help they have received from international troops, especially those from the United States, and there is a strong, broad-based desire for such troops to remain in the country. But much work needs to be done and progress is not guaranteed. Helping Afghans build infrastructure, which in many regions is nonexistent, attack endemic corruption, address narco-trafficking, train their Army and police, all while fighting an insurgency that remains patient, hidden, and dangerous, are tasks that will require years. As in Iraq, an essential element of achieving overall success will depend on the leadership, character, and vision of Afghanistan's elected leaders.

VII. HORN OF AFRICA (HOA) AND YEMEN

A. SITUATION OVERVIEW

The geographic region of Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) includes Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Sudan, Yemen, Somalia and the Seychelles. CJTF-HOA conducts operations, training, and humanitarian missions to assist host nations to help themselves in combating terrorism, denying extremist groups from utilizing ungoverned space, while trying to meet the needs of their citizens. CJTF-HOA is supported by two other commands: Commander Task Force - 150 (CTF-150), a naval force which is commanded by a Dutch Flag officer with nine ships from seven countries, and a Joint Special Operations Task Force. Overall, CJTF-HOA has approximately 1,400 U.S. forces on the ground and over 500 Coalition personnel at sea.

The Horn of Africa is vulnerable to penetration by regional extremist groups, terrorist activity, and ethnic violence. Al Qaida has a history of planning, training for, and conducting major terrorist attacks in this region, such as the bombings of U.S. Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. The volatility of this region is fueled by a daunting list of challenges, to include extreme poverty, corruption, internal conflicts, border disputes, uncontrolled borders and territorial waters, weak internal security capabilities, natural disasters, famine, lack of dependable water sources, and an underdeveloped infrastructure. The combination of these serious challenges creates an environment that is ripe for exploitation by extremists and criminal organizations.

More specifically, Somalia, a failed state in the heart of HOA, is a safe haven for East Africa al Qaida associated cells. There is also an increasing number of piracy operations that have been planned and launched from Somalia. In January 2006, our naval forces seized a vessel in the international waters off the Somali coast engaged in piracy. We will

continue to monitor and, when necessary, take action against such destabilizing activities in the region.

Sudan remains a flashpoint of violence, particularly in the volatile Darfur region where over two million people have been displaced and an estimated 200,000 have been killed in the past three years. Ongoing peace talks there remain a challenge, and the potential for ungoverned space in Sudan to be exploited by terrorist groups is high. Additionally, the festering border conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea has the potential to escalate into a full-scale war that would destabilize both of these countries, while potentially spreading instability throughout the Horn of Africa.

B. STRATEGIC AND COUNTRY FOCUS

As U.S. and partner forces continue to apply pressure on al Qaida and associated movements in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and other places, there is a likelihood that some of these extremists will migrate to the Horn of Africa in search of safe havens and ungoverned space, as they have done in the past. Working closely with U.S. Embassy personnel in the region, CJTF-HOA assists partner governments in building indigenous capacity to deny terrorists access to their territory. The building of indigenous capacity not only includes training local security and border forces, but also involves assisting with low-level civic projects throughout HOA such as digging wells, building schools and distributing books, and holding medical and veterinary clinics in remote villages. The capabilities gained by local forces from this training and the goodwill engendered by CJTF-HOA's numerous humanitarian operations help discredit extremist propaganda and bolster local desires and capabilities to defeat terrorists before they can become entrenched.

Our partners in the Horn of Africa share our goal of a region that is stable and free from terrorist activity and violence. Many have played a critical role in making progress toward this goal. Kenya is important in this regard, playing a leadership role throughout East Africa. With one of Africa's most professional militaries, Kenya has been a critical ally in our mutual fight against terrorism in the region. In September 2005, Kenya hosted regional exercise GOLDEN SPEAR 2005, and in close cooperation with CENTCOM established the Disaster Management Center of Excellence in Nairobi. The primary focus of this Center of Excellence and the GOLDEN SPEAR exercise is to build regional disaster management capacity and cooperation.

Djibouti, where CJTF-HOA is headquartered, continues to provide support for U.S. military basing, training, and counter-terrorism operations, including maritime interdiction operations. Yemen has demonstrated increasing willingness to confront extremists within its borders. We have worked together in training Yemen's coast guard, an important capacity given that Yemen lies astride the critical sea lane chokepoint of the Bab el Mandeb. The United States is working with the Yemenis to develop a long-term border security strategy to better safeguard their territory. Ethiopia continues to work on security sector reform and is committed to combating terrorism and countering extremism within its borders. CJTF-HOA has deepened its relationship with Ethiopia and has reached out to Eritrea, emphasizing to both the importance of reducing tensions along their common border.

C. WAY AHEAD: INTERNATIONALIZING AND CIVILIANIZING

In many ways, CJTF-HOA is a model for how military forces might operate across the wider CENTCOM region in the future - our troops are in a preventive, economy of force posture, training and working in close cooperation with local security forces to identify extremist and terrorist threats that might try to become more established in the region. In 2006,

the Marine Corps will transfer authority of CJTF-HOA's headquarters to the Navy.

Despite the excellent work by CJTF-HOA's troops, we continue to contemplate ways to increase the effectiveness of this command. One way is to increase international, civilian, and interagency involvement in CJTF-HOA's mission. Close allies such as the UK and France already conduct significant operations in this region. Coordinating more closely with these forces can enhance stability in the Horn of Africa. Partnering with civilian agencies for many of the humanitarian missions undertaken in this chronically underdeveloped region is an important step in building an assistance and security relationship that makes extremism less attractive.

VIII. THEATER SECURITY COOPERATION AND OTHER REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

As in the Horn of Africa, CENTCOM engages other regional partners and encourages deepening cooperation through a variety of Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) programs, the pillars of which are: (1) Foreign Military Financing/Foreign Military Sales (FMF/FMS), (2) International Military Education and Training (IMET), (3) the Counter-Terrorism Fellowship Program (CTFP), and (4) Combined Military Exercises.

FMF allocations help strengthen our relationships with such key states as Pakistan, Egypt, and Jordan. FMF/FMS initiatives have been especially important in improving the capabilities of the Pakistani military by providing the weapons and equipment that allow them to contest operating areas of terrorist and their supporters. IMET provides regional military personnel the opportunity to attend courses at U.S. military institutions while learning about human rights, democratic values, civilian control of the military, and the rule of law. The United States should welcome the opportunity to train as many officers in our school systems as possible. The DoD's CTFP is regarded as an innovative way to build a global network of CT

experts and practitioners. It also reinforces a central pillar of strategy in the region - increase indigenous CT capabilities in partner countries. And combined military exercises enhance interoperability and assist our partners in developing capabilities to fight terrorism and extremism within their own borders. In 2005, 58 combined training events enhanced regional military capabilities. Certain annual exercises, such as EAGLE RESOLVE in the Gulf and GOLDEN SPEAR in the Horn of Africa, also emphasize preparedness and the need for regional cooperation in the event of manmade or natural disasters.

These Theater Security Cooperation programs merit long-term U.S. commitment. They boost interoperability with U.S. forces, encourage the professionalization of regional military forces, enhance intelligence sharing and information exchange, reinforce U.S. military access when required, and perhaps most importantly, foster the personal relationships between U.S. military personnel and their counterparts in partner countries that are central to building the trust and confidence needed between allies when they fight as partners against a common foe. We continue to support these programs as a matter of highest priority.

Whether sourced through Economic Support Funds, Coalition Support Funds, Foreign Military Financing, or other programs administered by other U.S. agencies, the U.S. assistance provided to our friends in the region is fundamental to building long-term security partnerships. Further benefits to TSC programs can be realized through Congressional authorities and funding levels which are flexible and facilitate interagency cooperation.

A. PAKISTAN

Pakistan remains an enormously valuable ally in the broad struggle against extremists in the region. Since September 11, 2001, Pakistan has captured or killed more al Qaida operatives than any other country. It also

launched major conventional operations against al Qaida strongholds. Pakistani Army offensive operations in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) have disrupted extremist activity, but they have not fully shut down al Qaida safe havens along the border with Afghanistan. This is likely more an issue of capability than of intent.

The Pakistani Army's deployment of additional troops along the border of Afghanistan prior to that country's September 2005 parliamentary elections helped ensure that the threats of violence by the Taliban and al Qaida did not disrupt these important elections. And Pakistan continues to hunt down and capture high level al Qaida and Taliban operatives, such as al Qaida operations director Faraj al Libi and Taliban chief spokesman Abdul Latif Hakimi. Continued operations against al Qaida and Taliban safe havens in Pakistan are in both of our countries' interests. We will continue to support these important efforts by Pakistan with intelligence sharing, security assistance, and military coordination.

In October 2005, we signed a Communications Interoperability and Security Memorandum of Agreement which will enhance the interoperability of our forces. We continue to hold regular meetings with Pakistan's military leaders and are working to establish a core network of U.S. and Pakistani liaison officers among our different headquarters and more robust communications among our units operating along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. American forces have worked very closely with the Pakistan military at all levels, as we assisted it in conducting and coordinating massive earthquake relief efforts in Northern Pakistan. Rapid and effective cooperation between Pakistan, the United States, and other Coalition members in this endeavor led to thousands of lives being saved.

CENTCOM will continue to work to deepen our engagement with Pakistan in order to defeat a common enemy. A long-term strategic partnership between

the United States and Pakistan is central to defeating al Qaida and other extremists groups which threaten the citizens of both of our countries.

B. KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia remains an important friend and has become a key battleground in the war against al Qaida terrorists. Spurred by a series of al Qaida attacks on Saudi and Western targets in the Kingdom, the Saudi government is now mobilized to hunt down and kill extremists within its borders. Saudi security forces have conducted numerous effective operations against al Qaida cells and operatives. Many of the top al Qaida leaders in Saudi Arabia have been killed in the past year. The organization of al Qaida in Saudi Arabia, however, is down but not out. Saudi leaders are committed and have had excellent tactical success against our common enemy.

CENTCOM will continue our close cooperation with Saudi security forces in the coming year and will continue to assist the government of Saudi Arabia in its battle against al Qaida. In this regard, both the U.S. Military Training Mission and the Office of the Program Manager - Saudi Arabian National Guards (OPM SANG) are adding counterterrorism training to their traditional programs of conventional military preparedness. Future military exercise programs will also include more counterterrorism efforts. We are also looking to expand conventional force interoperability through land force exercises between Saudi military forces and Army Forces Central Command/ARCENT, and through continued training opportunities such as the Royal Saudi Air Force participation in the U.S. Air Force's annual "Red Flag" exercise at Nellis Air Force Base. At higher levels of government, cooperation between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia is likely to be enhanced by the November 2005 launching of a U.S.-Saudi Strategic Dialogue by Secretary of State Rice and Saudi Foreign Minister Saud.

C. ARABIAN GULF STATES

The Arabian Gulf states of Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Oman are important partners in our effort to maintain stability in the Gulf and in our ability to conduct operations across the region. Kuwait remains host to the Combined Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC) and serves as the primary staging point for our forces and equipment rotating in and out of Iraq. Kuwait's steady support for Coalition efforts in Iraq has been essential.

Bahrain serves as the home to U.S. Naval Forces Central Command and the United States Fifth Fleet. The continuing development of its Counter-Terrorism Operations and Intelligence Center has helped several agencies of the Bahraini government focus on and plan for responding to potential terrorist attacks. Qatar provides excellent host nation support to CENTCOM's Forward Headquarters and the Combined Forces Air Component Command's Combined Air Operations Center (CFACC-CAOC). They also hosted EAGLE RESOLVE 05, a Gulf regional disaster management exercise, which proved to be an effective way to deepen regional cooperation.

The UAE promotes regional cooperation and combat effectiveness by hosting air exercises at its Gulf Air Warfare Center (AWC). The AWC is building multilateral cohesion and air warfare interoperability among the Gulf countries. The United Arab Emirates is a valued partner in regional security and aggressively supports our efforts against global terrorist networks. Oman, perhaps the most strategically located state in the region, partners with U.S. forces in exercises and other activities that help keep global commerce flowing. We work with Oman to develop forces capable of controlling its extensive coastline and borders.

The terrorist threat throughout the Gulf remains high. We have worked closely with governments and security forces in the region to disrupt al Qaida's stated desire to attack the region's oil infrastructure. Continued

investment in security cooperation programs and assistance improves the capabilities of allied Gulf nations, enables them to provide for their own security, and allows them to continue to provide critical contributions to Coalition activities throughout CENTCOM's AOR. As always, our Arabian Gulf partners and the United States cooperate out of mutual interest, regional stability, and a desire to disrupt and prevent terrorist activity.

D. EGYPT

Egypt remains the traditional leader of the Arab world and a key Coalition ally in the fight against extremism in the region. In 2005, Egypt hosted a reconciliation conference for Iraqis who sought to overcome ethnic and sectarian differences. Egypt continues to provide critical support to the Palestinian-Israeli peace process. On the border with Gaza, Egyptian forces have helped to preserve stability in the aftermath of Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza strip.

U.S. military assistance to Egypt continues to produce positive results. The \$1.3 billion we annually provide to Egypt for the procurement of U.S. equipment, together with an additional \$1.2 million annually in IMET funding, have helped Egypt modernize and professionalize its armed forces and serve as a model for regional security and stability. In 2005, Egypt hosted the BRIGHT STAR exercise, the largest military exercise in the CENTCOM AOR, in which 12 nations and over 30,000 troops participated. Egyptian support for this important exercise, which emphasized interoperability, was significant. The Egyptian military also continued its contribution to the Coalition effort in Afghanistan, providing an Egyptian field hospital and donating 16,000 AK-47s to the Afghan National Army.

Egypt's position as protector of the Suez Canal and gateway to the Middle East has contributed greatly to the Coalition efforts in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Hundreds of Suez Canal transits and thousands of overflights

have expedited our military operations in the AOR. We look forward to continuing cooperation with Egypt on ways to bring stability to the region and continuing our strong relationship with the Egyptian security services. Like other nations in the region, Egypt experienced a series of damaging terrorist attacks in 2005. Egyptian counterterrorist and other security forces remain vital in working to defeat this common enemy.

E. JORDAN

Jordan remains an invaluable and increasingly influential regional partner in the fight against extremism and in the achievement of regional stability. King Abdullah II is a leading voice for moderation and tolerance in the Arab world. The country's strategic location, influence, and well-developed security establishment give Jordan a regional voice of proportions much greater than its size would indicate. Jordan's highly trained and professional armed forces represent a positive example for other regional militaries. As economic reforms made in the late 1990s continue to generate respectable growth rates, Jordan's regional influence will increase.

Jordan has contributed significantly to our efforts throughout the region. For example, Jordan hosts important training schools for Iraqi military forces, air traffic controllers, and aviation inspectors. These programs are major elements of our strategy to build competent and capable Iraqi security forces and may provide opportunities for broader training to help professionalize other regional security services.

The November 9, 2005, Amman suicide bombings by al Qaida that murdered scores of Jordanians have had a deep effect on their views of terrorism and al Qaida. It is clear that our programs of military and economic assistance remain vital. Jordan uses our assistance to strengthen its economy, modernize its armed forces, and improve regional efforts to defeat extremism. We will continue to focus our security assistance with Jordan to develop its

peacekeeping and Special Forces capabilities, and to build intelligence sharing and personnel exchange programs in support of CT efforts.

F. LEBANON

With the departure of Syria's forces from Lebanon, the country has an opportunity to move in the direction of greater security and stability. The Lebanese and international outrage over the assassination of Prime Minister Rafik Hariri sparked a series of dramatic events: massive street protests, the withdrawal of Syrian forces, and the election of a parliament that is no longer beholden to Syria. Despite these positive developments, the situation in Lebanon remains tense, with Syrian intelligence activity continuing. There is continued concern about the delays in disarming militias, such as Hezbollah, as called for by UNSCR 1559, and the tacit acceptance by some elements of the Lebanese government of Hezbollah's retention of its weapons, even as it participates in the political process. The continued existence of sectarian militias means that Lebanon remains at risk of internal conflict.

It is in the interest of the United States that Lebanon be stable and free of Syrian influence, and that its security forces are able to control its borders and maintain domestic order. We have planned a growing security assistance program with Lebanon that can help in fulfilling these goals. Our IMET program trains Lebanese officers at U.S. military schools. In 2006, we will work to further develop our support for and relationship with Lebanon's security forces.

G. CENTRAL ASIAN STATES

The Central Asia region is undergoing significant change, with Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan completing elections this past year, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan remaining stable, and Uzbekistan isolating itself from broader engagement. In a region at the crossroads between Europe and Asia, the

stability and further development of transportation and energy networks is increasingly important for global economic health. CENTCOM continues to work to deepen our engagement with the states of Central Asia, assisting the security forces in the region to improve border security, CT and counter-narcotics capabilities, as well as enhance military professionalism.

Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan remain important partners, while our cooperation with Uzbekistan has waned in light of our departure from Karshi-Khanabad Airfield (K2). Kyrgyzstan's continued support for U.S. basing at Manas is an important part of sustaining operations in Afghanistan, as have been the overflight rights allowed by the other countries of Central Asia. Tajikistan's excellent support of ISAF logistics efforts has also been instrumental in stabilizing Afghanistan.

Radical Islamic extremism and terrorism, the drug trade, and corruption threaten regional stability and challenge the governments in the region. CENTCOM stands ready to help these governments address these transnational challenges through increased training and regional cooperation. Organized crime and extremism from groups such as al Qaida and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan make threats of violence and intimidation a real concern for many. U.S. troop presence in the region, whether through training exercises or at supporting bases for Afghanistan, helps give the people of the region confidence to resist such intimidation.

With a rapidly growing economy and increasingly professional military, Kazakhstan continues to emerge as a leader in the region. The pace and scale of its military reforms have been impressive. Kazakhstan's engineering troops continue to perform with distinction in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. CENTCOM is assisting other countries, such as Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, in undertaking programs of military reform designed to increase the professionalism of their armed forces.

Despite its challenges, Central Asia is a region with much promise. The potential for significant economic growth throughout the region, to include Afghanistan, is substantial if the governments of the region maintain a focus on constructive economic and political reforms and stamping out corruption. Through military-to-military engagement, exercises, and training, we will continue to emphasize regional cooperation to help these countries take advantage of the growing opportunities in the region, and address the transnational threats that can undermine them. It remains important for the larger powers in the region to work cooperatively in Central Asia to achieve security goals. Nineteenth Century Great Power Games do nothing to enhance regional security.

IX. IRAN AND SYRIA

While the United States cooperates as a partner with the vast majority of the countries in the CENTCOM AOR to combat terrorism and extremism and provide essential stability, Iran and Syria stand out for their lack of cooperation. The actions of these repressive regimes have consistently been contrary to achieving stability in the broader region.

A. IRAN

The situation with Iran is tense, and the possibility for miscalculation with U.S. forces remains high. CENTCOM forces in the region continue to watch Iran carefully to prevent any destabilizing activities that contribute to internal Iraqi or Afghan frictions, or threaten regional stability. Iran's quest for nuclear weapons capability is particularly troubling. Iran seeks "creeping normalcy" that will permit international acceptance of its nuclear fuel cycle, while buying time for potential covert nuclear activities. We believe that Iran's declared objective of self-sufficient nuclear fuel production is coupled with the ulterior goal of

weapons production. Iran's withdrawal from the IAEA's Additional Protocol or the NPT could decrease the timeline necessary to produce a weapon. A nuclear-armed Iran would dramatically increase instability in the region and could pressure other countries in the CENTCOM AOR to consider acquiring such weapons.

Iranian-sponsored activities in Iraq continue to be unhelpful. Iran is pursuing a multi-track policy in Iraq, consisting of overtly supporting the formation of a stable, Shia Islamist-led central government while covertly working to diminish popular and military support for U.S. and Coalition operations there. Additionally, sophisticated bomb making material from Iran has been found in improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in Iraq.

While generally thought to be for defense, Iran continues to build a credible military capable of regional power projection. It has the largest military capability in the region and a record of aggressive military action in and around the Arabian Gulf. Its power projection capabilities stem primarily from its navy and ballistic missiles. Iran's military consists of over 350,000 personnel with an additional 300,000 trained reserve/Basij Forces that could be mobilized in times of crisis. The Iranian Armed Forces include two distinct, parallel military organizations - the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) and the Regular military forces. Each controls its own ground, naval, air, and air defense forces and equipment.

In addition to defending against external threats, the IRGC also focuses on an internal security mission and is the lead Iranian agency for supporting terrorism. Competition between the IRGC and Regular forces for limited resources and competing chains of command make Iranian military intentions difficult to decipher. This heightens our concern for the potential for miscalculation with U.S. forces in the region.

Iran's ground forces are arrayed across the country with the majority of combat power along the Iran-Iraq border. The Iranian navies continue

their rapid growth. The IRGC Navy has been developed primarily for the Strait of Hormuz scenario in which Iran would attempt to "internationalize" a conflict by choking off oil exports through the Strait. To disperse large quantities of recently purchased small boats, high speed missile boats, torpedo fast attack craft, and midget submarines, Iran has embarked upon an expansion project for naval bases throughout its littoral. Asymmetric military strategies and naval force modernization, a key national priority, enhance Iran's capability for power projection in the region.

The IRGC Air Force maintains control over most of Iran's ballistic missiles and rockets. The accuracy and reliability of its rocket systems vary, but Iran is capable of targeting all Gulf States, the Arabian peninsula, Israel, and U.S. and Coalition forces in the region with little warning.

In addition to Iran's conventional and ballistic missile capabilities, another lethal aspect of Iran's power projection is its ties to regional and global terrorism. Iran remains on the U.S. State Department's list of state sponsors of terrorism and provides extensive support to the Lebanese Hezbollah and several Palestinian rejectionist groups. Along with this support comes influence. Additionally, Iran's own intelligence elements are stationed throughout the CENTCOM AOR and beyond and are trained and prepared to execute terrorist attacks at the direction of Tehran.

As the diplomacy surrounding Iran's quest for nuclear weapons plays out, CENTCOM will continue to vigilantly monitor Iran's conventional force posture and maintain a strong naval, air, and ground capability to deter Iran from attempts at further destabilizing the region.

B. SYRIA

Despite reports of stepped-up activities by Syria's security establishment to interdict foreign fighters moving into Iraq, Syria remains

the central transit point for al Qaida's foreign fighter and suicide bomber network, which is responsible for the deaths of thousands of Iraqi civilians. As a repressive authoritarian state, the Syrian government has the capacity to do more to pressure the extremist network moving through its country. Moreover, it has done little to suppress the Iraqi Baathist insurgent and financial networks that continue to attack Iraqi government officials, infrastructure, and military forces. Syrian support for Iranian meddling in Lebanon, and its own intelligence and intimidation activity in Lebanon, show Syria's establishment to be unwilling to play a constructive role in regional security.

During 2005, the international community insisted that Syria fully cooperate in the UN investigation of the assassination of Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in which it appears that Syrian officials were complicit. Syria remains a designated state sponsor of terrorism, providing support to Palestinian terror groups and others. Syria also maintains a chemical weapons and ballistic missile capability that is one of the most lethal in the region. Syria's conventional forces, while much-deteriorated over the past decade, nevertheless represent a capability to interfere overtly with the security of its neighbors. As with Iran, CENTCOM tracks and monitors Syrian capability and retains sufficient combat power to deter aggressive Syrian behavior.

X. CRITICAL MISSION ENABLERS

Several critical mission enablers provide CENTCOM troops ways to enhance operational success. These include a strong coalition of allies, interagency coordination, intelligence, logistics, strategic sealift and inter- and intra-theater airlift, communications, personnel, flexible spending, and strategic communications.

A. A STRONG COALITION

Our Coalition partners continue to make essential contributions to successes throughout the region. The combined participation, efforts, and coordination of over 90 nations send a clear message about the global importance of operations against extremism and terrorism. We will continue to draw on our allies' substantial strengths as we further develop the capabilities of the Iraqi government and its security forces, while reshaping the Coalition as the ability of the Iraqis to provide their own security increases. Similarly, as Afghan security capacity grows and NATO-ISAF's role increases, the OEF Coalition will adapt.

To fully optimize Coalition operations, we must minimize the operational and informational seams between national forces, while increasing the flexibility of U.S. policies to reflect new and unique information sharing requirements, particularly with regard to intelligence. The United States will continue to explore ways to expand the scope of the Coalition, further internationalizing efforts throughout the region while maintaining an adaptive command structure and force posture as international roles change. As America and our partners continue to pressure al Qaida and associated extremists, it is important to emphasize the global scope and duration of this threat and endeavor to create a Coalition with a long-term horizon, supported by U.S. and partner nation interagency organizations.

B. INTERAGENCY COORDINATION

Success against the extremists and terrorists who threaten our nation requires the integration of all instruments of national power at all levels - tactical, operational, and strategic. At the tactical level, our Joint Interagency Task Forces (JIATFs) have successfully leveraged national assets on successful missions to disrupt terrorists' finances and kill and capture terrorists and former regime leaders in Iraq. PRTs in Afghanistan, with

representatives from the military, the State Department, USAID, and USDA, have been critical to developing and expanding the capabilities of the Afghan government, while similar interagency teams are beginning to operate to some extent in Iraq. We will continue to explore new models to better synchronize interagency efforts throughout the region and work to expand the operations and agencies in CENTCOM's Joint Interagency Coordination Group.

Substantially more work, however, is needed for increased interagency coordination at higher levels of government and for insuring unity of effort. We need significantly more non-military personnel in the CENTCOM AOR with expertise in areas such as economic development, civil affairs, agriculture, and law. As the focus of operations in the CENTCOM theater has shifted away from sustained combat to counterinsurgency, security force training, and economic development, individuals with such expertise have become increasingly important. Even a small number of individuals from the State Department, USDA, or USAID on the ground and working closely with CENTCOM forces can have dramatic impacts on operations throughout the region. The long-term commitment of fuller interagency participation in the region is essential.

C. INTELLIGENCE

Precise intel-driven action is a central component to defeating insurgents and terrorists. Our "find, fix, finish" targeting equation, while the best in the world, is out of balance. We have plenty of "finish" forces, but insufficient "find and fix" assets to locate an asymmetric, hidden enemy. Intelligence, planning, and operations must be tightly fused together without gaps and seams to enable agile, decentralized friendly action. Close interaction with our partners from the CIA, NSA, FBI, and other agencies has helped to secure timely and accurate intelligence necessary for successful

operations. However, limitations in several of our key capabilities continue to pose challenges.

A common information network that is accessible and available to all of our Coalition and agency partners is critical to battlefield success. Our experiences highlight the importance of an established interoperability standard for all intelligence systems that can function in a joint and combined environment. Solutions for this are hardware, software, and policy based.

Current theater collection capabilities are insufficient to meet our large and growing requirements. There is a need for persistent surveillance which provides actionable intelligence for our forces. Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) such as Predator and Global Hawk offer some solutions to persistent surveillance. And while UAVs have transformed the battlespace, and the demand for their capabilities at all echelons is significant, we realize the need to develop an integrated architecture of many sensors to support operational units. Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) activities support all types of operations, to include developing targets, providing overwatch for convoy patrols, and monitoring main supply routes for IED emplacement.

Manned aircraft are also critical to our gathering of timely and accurate intelligence. The U-2 aircraft has the unique capability of providing flexible, long-dwell coverage over large areas, making it indispensable for CENTCOM. Sustained moving target indicator coverage, primarily contributed by JSTARS, helps to shape border security operations and interdict enemy movements. The P-3 Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aircraft are important in monitoring oil infrastructure security, shaping battlefield operations, and interdicting enemy movements in the maritime battlespace.

Finally, we continue to experience a significant shortage of intelligence specialties such as analysts, translators, interrogators, and interpreters. We are working with the services to develop more of these specialists, but the supply is well short of demand for CENTCOM-identified requirements. Among other things, linguists are needed to fuse collected SIGINT and HUMINT, particularly in high-demand languages such as Arabic, Farsi, Dari, and Pashtun. Counter-intelligence and Human Intelligence (CI/HUMINT) specialists are needed to fully exploit captured operatives, foreign fighters, and documents. Investing now in these critical intel specialties, many of which take years to mature, will better prepare us for the long conflict ahead.

D. LOGISTICS

Strategic airlift, fast sealift, prepositioned equipment sets, and access to bases with critical infrastructure are the key logistics components to operational flexibility and success for the widely diverse requirements across the CENTCOM AOR. The timely deployment, equipping, and sustainment of units engaged in combat operations remain our primary logistics focus.

We continue to work with the Joint Staff, DOD, the Department of State, and partner nations to ensure continued access to aerial and seaport infrastructure necessary to facilitate the rapid and efficient flow of equipment, troops, and sustainment in support of ongoing and future operations.

The CENTCOM Deployment and Distribution Center (CDDOC) continues to mature and provides critical unit deployment and sustainment information that enables timely and effective distribution operations across the AOR. CENTCOM is working to transform and enhance its theater logistics infrastructure and processes to provide seamless end-to-end visibility for all phases of operations. Our intent is to leverage ongoing DoD-wide

logistics transformation initiatives in order to "right size" the theater logistics force.

E. STRATEGIC SEALIFT AND INTRA-THEATER AND INTER-THEATER AIRLIFT

Strategic airlift and surge sealift capacity are essential to the CENTCOM strategy. Our warfighting partnership with United States Transportation Command (USTC) continues to provide that capability. Ongoing CENTCOM operations and future plans rely heavily on a rapid flow of forces and materiel into the theater to meet an array of challenging contingencies. For example, the immediate and substantial humanitarian response to the earthquake in Pakistan could not have occurred without such capabilities. In every major conflict fought in the area of operations, large numbers of troops and equipment required substantial airlift, sealift, and time to move.

As of February 2006, over 2.9 million personnel and 149 million square feet of cargo have been transported into the CENTCOM AOR in support of OEF and OIF. Sealift provided by USTC's Military Sealift Command and its commercial partners is the primary means for the transportation of equipment and sustainment supplies into the AOR. C-17 aircraft, together with the air refueling tanker fleet, form the backbone of the strategic airlift supporting CENTCOM operations. The C-17's performance and versatility, in particular, have been outstanding. Current sea and airlift, when linked to forward deployed equipment sets and pre-staged shipping give CENTCOM considerable operational flexibility.

F. COMMUNICATIONS

Flexible, high capacity, interoperable communications systems are essential to operations throughout the theater. CENTCOM systems are pushed to their limits daily, and requirements continue to increase dramatically.

Many of these requirements are satisfied by costly and vulnerable commercial services.

Our Joint C4 architecture needs to be built from the bottom up. We spend significant time, energy, and money on patching together the different systems from separate Services. This is an inefficient way to leverage what should be a significant comparative advantage in decision making capability over the enemy. Due to a lack of common secure network standards for information assurance, CENTCOM uses many applications and systems that have proprietary standards. These introduce vulnerabilities into our networks. Hackers and malicious code activity pose a constant threat of system exploitation and data-exfiltration. While CENTCOM lacks adequate monitoring tools to manage the theater network, we have implemented numerous processes and procedures to mitigate network risks.

U.S. and Coalition forces depend on strategic and tactical satellite communications due to immature terrestrial capabilities in theater. Intra-theater communications are critical for sharing persistent surveillance and intelligence data, and total bandwidth requirements continue to grow at an exponential rate. However, end of life-cycle and ongoing degradation of Military Satellite Communications (MILSATCOM) constellations threaten to limit our capabilities. We need MILSATCOM that provides transformational capabilities to rapidly disseminate time-sensitive instrumented sensor technology data which can provide our deployed forces with reliable "comms-on-the-move" capabilities regardless of location and interoperability between U.S., Coalition, and host nation communication systems.

New technology, to include new counter-IED technology, and a reliance on wireless systems increase the need for comprehensive spectrum management. We must achieve and maintain "spectrum superiority" by denying enemy access and ensuring that our systems operate in an interference-free environment. Because we lack automated capability to dynamically manage the spectrum at

the tactical level, we must focus on training spectrum managers in all Services and equipping them with the right tools.

G. PERSONNEL

The most important weapon in CENTCOM's arsenal is our people. The majority of CENTCOM forces are deployed forward in combat zones. Consequently, quality of life enhancements for deployed forces and families such as Combat Zone Tax Relief and Imminent Danger Pay are important and contribute significantly to our service members' quality of life and morale. The Rest and Recuperation Leave Program continues to be a major success, serving over 290,000 troops to date. Special Leave Accrual has been important to our long-deployed service members. The increase in the Serviceman's Group Life maximum coverage to \$400,000 and the death gratuity increase to \$100,000 for combat zone deaths contribute to the well-being of our service families.

We continue to focus on policies that attract talented personnel to our headquarters and reward joint tours. We support full joint credit to qualified officers who serve a one year deployment to a CENTCOM joint task force headquarters. Additionally, to provide a more efficient environment for our Headquarters staff, we are working with the U.S. Air Force and DoD to conduct necessary refurbishment and expansion of our Tampa facilities.

CENTCOM is coordinating with force providers to address high demand personnel requirements across the theater. As noted above, in 2006, we will continue to experience a significant shortage in intelligence specialties, linguists, and CI/HUMINT experts. Additional funding for contract support might meet immediate requirements in these areas. However, there is an enduring need for greater service school generation of such specially trained personnel who play a vital role in counterinsurgency and counterterrorist operations throughout the theater.

H. FLEXIBLE SPENDING AUTHORITY

CENTCOM relies on continued Congressional support in providing the flexible legislative authorities and funding necessary to fight our enemies throughout the AOR. The Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) remains the most direct and effective non-kinetic tool available to our commanders in the counterinsurgency fight. Providing a highly agile means to meet immediate needs for civic cleanup, potable water and sanitation, and agricultural projects, CERP builds good-faith relationships with the Iraqi and Afghan people. For FY05, \$718 million in Iraq and \$136 million in Afghanistan was used by U.S. and Coalition forces to assist in reconstruction. Additional funding in the supplemental is necessary for this important program. At the same time, funding for the highly-successful DoD Rewards Program remains important. This program has yielded information leading to the capture of many terrorists and insurgents. A 400 percent increase in the number of rewards paid from FY04 to FY05 demonstrates strong local support for this program. Additionally, Coalition Support Funds (CSF) and the Section 9009 authority allowing DoD to provide transportation and sustainment support to selected Coalition countries remain essential to building and maintaining our Coalition partnerships.

Continued Congressional support is also needed to establish and maintain infrastructure and facilities throughout the theater. Additionally, continuation of contingency construction authority is essential to providing the flexibility to meet infrastructure requirements for our commanders.

I. STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

The effective communication of CENTCOM's vision of partnership and a stable and secure region to a global audience remains a key mission enabler. Our communications strategy must be closely coordinated with interagency

counterparts to effectively convey the United States Government's intentions, accomplishments, and goals. But it is also essential that the USG work to expose the enemy's ruthless tactics and dark vision for the future. Increased interagency coordination and resources will significantly enhance our ability to win the war of ideas.

XI. STRATEGIC ISSUES

The following strategic issues are highlighted because they significantly impact both our current and future ability to fight wars and defeat the terrorists and extremists who threaten our country.

A. COUNTER-IED AND FORCE PROTECTION

Our enemies understand that they cannot confront us face-to-face and survive, so they increasingly rely on Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and suicide bombers to attack our forces, our partners, and civilians. IEDs are the single greatest source of our casualties and remain the enemy's most effective weapon. They are the perfect asymmetric weapon - cheap, effective, and anonymous. The enemy intends to use IEDs and suicide bombers to achieve strategic effect, creating casualties and media impact to promote the perception of insecurity and erode public support for the mission. IEDs have proliferated and become increasingly lethal, with technology and tactics available on the internet. They have been used in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia.

Force protection remains a top priority throughout CENTCOM's area, and American commanders in the region are aggressively engaged in programs to safeguard our forces, their vehicles, their bases, and their living areas. These programs include providing individual body armor to every soldier and civil service employee in Iraq and Afghanistan. We also continue to produce up-armored HMMWVs through the assistance of supplemental funding; over 10,000

such vehicles have been delivered to the Iraq theater. Further, we have fielded thousands of IED counter-measure devices, employed innovative counter-IED technologies, enhanced training, and focused our intelligence efforts on the IED challenge.

While we have done much to counter the enemy's use of IEDs, especially in Iraq, significant work remains including much that resides beyond the realm of CENTCOM. The Joint IED Defeat Organization headed by retired General Montgomery Meigs is a good beginning to mobilize our country's vast resources to address this problem, but national efforts should build upon, not end, with this office. Government and private sector research and development must be marshaled against this threat. Such an effort is necessary to comprehensively counter this serious threat to our troops that will undoubtedly spread beyond the CENTCOM region.

B. CONTESTING THE VIRTUAL WORLD

Much of this statement has emphasized the need to prevent al Qaida and associated movements from gaining physical safe havens from which to conduct military training, propaganda operations, and plan future terrorist attacks. Whether with smart bombs or special operations forces, the U.S. military has the capability to destroy such safe havens as long as we have target information on them. We and many of our partners have done this in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other places around the globe. That is why the enemy is much more reluctant to mass in physical safe havens for very long. Al Qaida knows that they are vulnerable in such areas.

But there are other safe havens used by the enemy that are truly safe. These are places where al Qaida also conducts military training, propaganda operations, and plans for future terrorist attacks. It is also where they do most of their fundraising. It is the virtual world. And this safe haven of websites and the internet is proliferating rapidly, spreading al Qaida's

hateful ideology well beyond its birthplace in the Middle East. Parts of Europe, for example, have now become intellectual hubs of extremist Islamic thought, largely because of the internet and lax government policies regarding extremist activities. Yet we have done little to contest these safe havens, even though they are at least as dangerous to our security as the enemy's physical sanctuaries have been.

We recognize that this is a contentious matter with a variety of important issues at stake. CENTCOM does not advocate "shutting down the internet," but we must recognize that failing to contest these virtual safe havens entails significant risk to our nation's security and the security of our troops in the field. Should internet servers based in America be allowed to enable terrorists to show the bloody decapitation of an innocent American citizen to tens of thousands of extremists worldwide? As a government, we need to come to terms with the issues raised by such a question.

C. DETAINEES

An essential part of our combat operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan entails the need to detain enemy combatants and terrorists. Ultimately, detainees are best handled by host governments, but at the current time neither Iraq nor Afghanistan has the institutional capacity to accomplish such tasks. Military resources continue to be heavily taxed by guarding, caring for, and processing detainees.

By following up on cases of suspected, alleged, or actual detainee abuse, most notable at Abu Ghraib, we continue to make improvements regarding detainee operations. We have expanded senior leader oversight across the theater, intensified training of personnel, and conducted frequent inspection visits. But the military has less control over the next steps, which involve getting key states of the region to take responsibility for the arrest, detention, trial, and incarceration of terrorists and criminals. The biggest

impediment to making progress on the detainee issue is the lack of an institutional capacity - prisons and adequate justice systems based on the rule of law - to process and confine criminals and violent terrorists. A coordinated approach among USG and international agencies with the relevant expertise to accelerate efforts to help Iraq and Afghanistan build the legal and judicial institutions is needed. The rule of law must be applied in both Iraq and Afghanistan in order for successful counterinsurgency activities to bear fruit.

XII. JOINT WARFIGHTING

The essence of CENTCOM's mission is joint warfighting. All operations are enabled by joint capabilities, as are our major headquarters. It is difficult to imagine fighting other than as a joint team. It is important that the Services increasingly train their Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Coast Guardsmen, and Marines in the same way they will fight - jointly. As CENTCOM heads toward its sixth year of sustained combat operations, we have had successes and setbacks, and have tried to learn from them. A few are worth emphasizing.

- Precision Warfare. Precision in timing and location are more important than firepower, mass, and maneuver. All our forces operate today with a degree of precision that was the hallmark of only our special operations forces just a few years ago. Especially in counterinsurgency and counterterrorism campaigns, precision operations conducted by agile, flexible forces that can adapt while in contact are a key to success.
- Fusion of Intelligence and Operations. Precision operations are intelligence-driven. As noted above, we need to rebalance our "find, fix, finish" targeting cycle. We need to improve our intelligence capabilities across the spectrum, including ISR platforms, linguists, analysts, and

CI/HUMINT specialists. And although we have made dramatic strides in ops-intel fusion, we need to continue to make advances in this critical area, particularly at the conventional force level.

- Joint Command and Control. We have learned that establishing early the appropriate command and control structures across the theater is a key to effective operations. The three Joint Task Forces in CENTCOM's theater and our five component commands provide the expertise for planning, executing, and integrating the diverse array of complex joint and multinational operations we conduct.
- Asymmetric Warfare and the Lack of Neutrality on the Battlefield. We are in an era of asymmetric warfare. What is less understood is that the historical idea of neutrality on the battlefield does not exist in the mind of the ruthless enemy we fight. Al Qaida extremists target UN, NGO, and aid workers, as well as contractors, and anyone else who does not accept their fanaticism. This new reality on the battlefield may require deeper cooperation between the NGO community and Coalition forces. NGOs do not have to give up their neutrality, but they need to be mindful of the increased risks they face on the battlefield.
- Respect and Knowledge. Much of the broader struggle in the region is about respect. The vast majority of the people in the region want the same things that most Americans do - an opportunity for a better life for their families and children. Compared with the overall population, the number of extremists in the region is small, the number of terrorists even smaller. As emphasized throughout this statement, we are developing strong partnerships with the peoples and governments of the region to together defeat al Qaida and associated movements. To bolster this strategy, we should undertake many more cultural and educational exchanges between Americans and citizens from the Middle East. The more we

understand and respect each other, the better. We must also mobilize our country's resources, both military and civilian, to better understand the region and the extremist enemies we face. During the Cold War, the U.S. military had tens of thousands of experts on the Soviet Union, the Warsaw Pact, Russian language, and the ideology of communism. Today, those who know about Islam, the Middle East, speak Arabic, and understand al Qaida's perverted ideology are far fewer in number.

- Adapting Our Cold War Structures. The essential ingredient for all our battlefield success is the quality of our young service members and leaders. We must retain this force that enables the Joint team with their flexibility, adaptability, and professionalism. Beyond this, however, we need to adapt our authorities, organizational structures, doctrine, training, and equipment to confront the 21st Century battlefield. In CENTCOM we say "it takes a network to defeat a network," meaning that defeating Al Qaida requires us to rethink how we operate in Joint, inter-agency and Coalition teams. We have only begun this adaptation and it remains a priority for prosecuting this war effectively.

XIII. CONCLUSION

In 2006, the United States and its allies will seek to help the people of the CENTCOM region build upon the positive strategic developments that occurred in the theater during 2005. CENTCOM will remain fully committed to defeating extremist-inspired terrorism across the region. We will remain focused on helping the people and armed forces of Iraq and Afghanistan stabilize their countries, and providing assistance to Pakistan and Saudi Arabia that enables them to help themselves against their extremist threats. With our significant military capabilities throughout the region, we will work to deter Iran from threatening regional stability and security, and set conditions to continue the free flow of energy resources from the region. As

always, we are mindful that it is the exceptional performance and courage of our troops in the field who make achieving these goals possible.

With our numerous allies in the region, we are implementing a strategy based on partnership and shared interests to defeat al Qaida and associated extremists throughout the region. Victory in this long war will come slowly and subtly, but we are winning. We will prevail, in the same way our country mobilized its vast resources, talented citizens, and global allies to face down the fascist and communist threats of the last century. The patience and support of the American people and the Congress will be critical in bringing about this victory.